

***NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WESTERN REGION SUPPLEMENT 3-2002  
APPLICABLE TO INSTRUCTION 10-401  
JANUARY 3, 2003***

***Operations and Services  
Fire Weather Services, NWSPD 10-4  
Fire Weather Service Product Specification, NWSI 10-401***

***OFFICE-TO-OFFICE TRANSFER OF THE FIRE WEATHER PROGRAM***

**OPR:** W/WR1x3 (S. Birch)

**Certified by:** W/WR1 (R. Douglas)

**Type of Issuance:** Initial.

***SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:*** This supplement supersedes Regional Operations Manual Letter (ROML) W-20-99, dated December 30, 1999, filed with WSOM Chapter D-06.

Signed

12/20/02

Vickie Nadolski

Date

Director, Western Region

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1. Description: The purpose of this Supplement is to define policy and procedures for transferring Fire Weather Program responsibilities between Western Region (WR) Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs).

- a. It is the goal of the WR that every WFO have a fully integrated Fire Weather Program. To help achieve that goal, selected WR WFOs have been provided additional staffing. The additional staffing will be used in support of local and regional fire weather transition activities. These activities include training of NWS meteorologist, meet liaison and fire agency training obligations, and maintain local, regional, and national Incident Meteorologist (IMET) capabilities. Also where applicable, the additional staffing will supplement the number of qualified fire weather forecasters in order to maintain WFO fire weather shifts.
- b. WR WFOs can be classified into two types of offices: fire weather spin-up offices assuming fire weather responsibilities for the first time; and offices with an established Fire Weather Program who will transfer and/or assume responsibility for new fire weather zones.

### 2. Format and Procedures.

2.1 General Policy: A WFO will assume new or modify existing fire weather responsibilities after (1) satisfying prerequisites for program transfer, (2) ensuring backup procedures are in place, (3) obtaining Western Region Headquarter's (WRHs) authorization for the transfer, and (4) completing customer liaison and formal notification as described below.

2.2 Prerequisites: Before a WFO assumes or modifies existing fire weather forecast responsibility, the following prerequisites must be completed, as applicable:

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- a. The Meteorologist in Charge (MIC), in coordination with the transferring fire weather office, has identified all land management agencies operating within the WFO's new fire weather district.
- b. The spin-up office's MIC has selected a Fire Weather Program Leader and/or Incident Meteorologist (IMET) who has completed or is in the process of completing the minimum training and orientation requirements outlined in NWS Instruction 10-405.
- c. The WFO's new fire weather district and forecast zone boundaries (including NFDRS Zones) are defined in coordination with the transferring fire weather office(s), and customer agencies. Customers must be provided with maps and updated lists of new fire weather zone numbers, if applicable. (Note: Changing a NFDRS zone number does not require land managers to redefine their selection of fire danger rating stations or their geographical definition of their fire danger rating areas. It only requires them to make changes to the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) weather station catalog during their normal update cycle.)
- d. The WFO has obtained from the transferring fire weather office all operational materials such as RAWs site information and climatology, land management dispatch office phone numbers, maps, local forecast guidance studies, any local dissemination requirements other than the standard NWS communication gateway to the U.S. Forest Service's WIMS, and lists of unique fire weather forecast problems or service requirements.
- e. Forecasters must have completed training requirements outlined in NWS Directive 10-405.
- f. Forecasters must have a working knowledge of NWS Directive 10-4 and Instructions, all WR fire weather related Supplements and memorandums, and the local criteria for the Fire Weather Watch/Red Flag Warning Program.
- g. Forecasters must have participated in a practice program producing routine fire weather forecasts, land management forecasts (where applicable), National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS) trend forecasts (where applicable), red flag warnings and spot forecasts. (Note: These practice forecasts must be systematically monitored and critiqued by the appropriate transferring fire weather office, and various customers. Quality control and feedback should occur as soon after the forecast issuance as practical.)
- h. The WFO MIC or Warning Coordination Meteorologist and Fire Weather Program Leader must have taken one or more familiarization trips with the transferring fire weather office staff to customer facilities within the WFO's new fire weather district prior to transfer of services.

- i. After coordination with WR Meteorological Services Division (MSD), spin-up offices shall complete a dissemination test of fire weather products to WIMS or other appropriate dissemination system no later than 30 days prior to transfer of forecast responsibility.
- j. All affected WFOs must complete and distribute a new or updated local Fire Weather Operating Plan. The new plan, or updates to current plans, must be coordinated with the State Liaison Office MIC and should be incorporated into appropriate geographical area fire weather operating plans. New plans must be distributed to user agencies prior to the fire season.

2.3 Backup Responsibilities: Service backup plans shall be in accordance with the Western Region Supplement entitled *Western Region Backup Plans*. Offices should participate in one practice backup exercise that includes fire weather products.

2.4 Statement of Readiness: When prerequisites for program transfer are satisfied, the MIC shall submit a written Statement of Readiness (Appendix A: example of a Statement of Readiness ) to the Regional Director that confirms preparedness of staffing for the additional workload, familiarity with fire weather and land management products and services, and the readiness to accept the responsibility for those services. Offices with an established fire weather program, who are taking on new fire weather zones or fully integrating the program into WFO operations, shall also submit a written Statement of Readiness. Appended to the Statement of Readiness shall be the following support documentation:

- a. General information: Overview of all fire weather and land management products and services to be provided, list of customers being served, fire weather zone map (including NFDRS Zones) and any changes to the original fire weather zone configuration.
- b. Fire Weather Implementation Tracking Information, at a minimum, must include: Identifying a fire weather program leader and an IMET, general descriptions of localized fire weather training accomplishments and special seminars, and the office's practice forecasts and product proficiency program, detailed list of outreach activities, and customer notification list and dates of correspondence.
- c. Copy of the local Fire Weather Operating Plan.
- d. Completed forecast staff Fire Weather Training Requirements Matrix, including list of forecaster, courses and completion dates.
- e. Copies of any letters or notes of communications with local and regional customers concerning the proposed transfer of services.

2.5 Procedure: After the Statement of Readiness is signed, fire weather services shall be transferred **prior** to the beginning of the local fire season as defined by customer agencies.

- a. The MIC and WR MSD shall coordinate the Fire Weather transfer process after a detailed review of WFO programs and staffing.
- b. All fire weather and land management services within a land management geographical area for a new fire weather spin-up office will be transferred at one time.

2.6 Regional Director Approval: The Regional Director remains the approving authority for fire weather transfer. When approved, the WFO MIC, the affected State Liaison Office MIC, and the Chief of MSD, shall coordinate to determine the exact time for products and services transfer.

2.7 Notification: Responsibilities for notification rests with the spin-up office and WR MSD.

- a. The spin-up WFO MIC is responsible for coordination and written notification to local Land Management Agencies and the appropriate Geographical Area Coordination Group(s) operating within the WFO CWFA between 30 to 60 days prior to implementation. Open houses or preseason fire weather customer workshops are recommended.
- b. WR MSD is responsible to provide written notification to the National Wildfire Coordination Group's Fire Weather Working Team Leader prior to implementation. The WR MSD (Fire Weather Program Manager) shall notify WIMS and Emergency Managers Weather Information Network (EMWIN) of the initiation date of operational products by the new office.

APPENDIX A

**Example of a Statement of Readiness**

MEMORANDUM FOR: W/WR - Vickie L. Nadolski

FROM: MIC FGZ - Michael E. Campbell

SUBJECT: Fire Weather Program, Statement of Readiness, NWSO Flagstaff, Arizona

REFERENCE: Memorandum from John Kelly (Assistant Administrator for Weather Services), Fire Weather Services Action Plan, Dated Jan 4, 1999, and Draft Western Region ROML, Fire Weather Transition

The Flagstaff WFO is ready to assume full fire weather responsibilities starting October 13, 1999. The office has worked with the local and regional fire agencies and Western Region MSD since 1997 to ensure a smooth transition to a modernized fire weather service for northern Arizona. Attached is a completed Fire Weather Implementation Package. The information in this package along with the letters from our fire weather customers support this statement of readiness.

We are looking forward to demonstrating to our fire weather partners the full capabilities and benefits of a modernized National Weather Service WFO .

Endorsement

I, Vickie L. Nadolski, Director, National Weather Service Western Region, endorse this transfer of Fire Weather Services.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Attachments

cc: WRX1 - NWS Western Region Meteorological Services Division